A detailed black and white illustration of a pine branch with needles and a small pine cone, arching over the title box.

EARTH SONGS

MARY CHAPIN SMITH



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Book 228

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EARTH SONGS

MARY CHAPIN SMITH

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The author wishes to thank the editors of Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine, the Journal of Outdoor Life, the Taylor-Trotwood Magazine, and Book News for permission to include in this volume such poems as originally appeared in their pages.



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TO MY HUSBAND,

Joyous friend and comrade, whose consideration has made this little book possible for me; maker of pleasant gardens, where one may dwell in the fine companionship of the birds and trees and under the airs of heaven, with Nature's ancient manuscript open wide, and writ in divers languages.

TO MY MOTHER,

Whose eyes were ever turned to the stars, and where she walked the flowers of goodness and beauty followed her.

Highlands, North Carolina

March 2, 1909



Sweet Mother Earth

*Death paused awhile without my door;
I did not bid him enter in,
For joys of Paradise can nevermore
Seem sweeter than they seem, in spite of sin
And wo, the joys of this dear earth;
Sweet earth, so wise and kind, so full of gentle
 mirth
Made soft by all the sorrow that underlies:—
Dear Mother Earth, in thy deep eyes
Dwell things unutterable; thy secrets but to learn,
Thy raptures fine to know, and feel the thrill
Of thy soft mother arms encircling still,
For this my heart doth ever yearn
And will alway, though I may hear the flow
Of streams eternal, and hills of Paradise may
 know.*



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THE CHANGING YEAR

*And the winds that follow on so fleet
In the sparkling trails of vanished gloom,
Are heavenly sweet
With the breath of early flowers a-bloom,
While the world is a heaving, trembling sea
Of sight and sound, and of Life to be.*

* * *

*Now the pale primrose offers up
Her precious golden cup,
Whence pure, celestial odors flow.
(Golden censers from heaven swing low.)*

*Gone the spiral stairway's trace
Where the white spiranthes climbed,
Gone the slender saffron's grace,
Following where the frost bells chimed.*

* * *

*The white-winged snow falls down most silently
And softly in large flakes, like many small
White birds that fly to earth; the snowbirds come
With fluttering wings, alighting on the tree,
The little tree that is their resting place,
Their fluffy feathers white like heaps of snow
Upon the limbs; they come in endless flight,
Blown through the air and dropping down to
earth,
As swift and silent as the falling snow.*

THE CHANGING YEAR



THEOCRITUS

While time dwells on the earth, the world's warm
hand

Shall reach far out into the dark

To seek thine own, Theocritus.

Long as the ardent air remembers to be thrilled

With sweetest sounds, shall ear be bent to catch

Those strains from earlier dawn, so wild and free:

Down the worn centuries has that procession filed,

Of shining shapes from days when time was young,

Touched with immortal youth, whose constant

flame

The gloom of ages cannot quench.

While this green earth doth hold

A lover of the hills and fields

Or soul most sick of cities' roar and ruck,

Pining for scents and sounds of sweeter air

So long shall thy fair flocks

Wind leisurely the hill of dreams, thy nightingales

Make moonlit thickets ring,

Sicilian airs float soft enchantment o'er our heads.

We still may hear from distant marsh, as Hercules
in other days,

The long-lost Hylas faintly calling, crying,

Imprisoned in his watery home amid the rushes
green:

Thyrsis, by wolf bereft, shall ever weep

For playful kid, his darling pet and pride,

While singing herdsmen through the years contend

In melodies each sweeter than the last;
And later loves
Shall laugh at love-lorn Polypheme,
Piping to Galatea, and see shake
The rough and hairy sides of Pan, whose little
hoofs
Keep frolic step to sylvan dance;
In lonely gardens ever may they watch,
Through mystic laurel boughs under the night's
pale sheen,
The wan Simaetha, passion-fired, invoke the
Lady Moon,
As, sighing yet, she turns her magic wheel;
And for all time, while love and song work to the
heart's undoing,
Daphnis to nymphs and shepherds still shall sing
His melting lays, and play the flute
To ravishment of mortal ears,
And still forever will he die of love;
The tuneful Thyrsis daily mourns for him,
While wolf and goat and lowing kine cry out
their grief,
And birds and flowers and trees, confounded, go
astray.

Of piercing through the thick and murky air
Of many weary and discordant years,
We hear thy far-off song, Theocritus.
It comes in music of the rills and streams,
The trill of birds, borne on the flying clouds,
In the white sea waves' laughing rush.

The violets' eyes still speak of thee;
The grassy pastures soft are but thy bed,
Haunted of dreams,
The pines thy night song, and the hills thy guard.
Nature herself, and love and passion wild,
Eternally are thine.

LARGESS

Wide, overarching roof of air,
Starshine and sunshine are enough.
Earth is too full of beauty unsolicited:
Her regal state and lordly ministers,
Her glowing pageants as they pass,
Are all too much for her fond lover, passion-pale,
And choked for utterance. Fair Eastern rose,
And Dawn, a shy, reluctant bride,
Slow lingering up the way;
The slender crescent boat that glides along,
Swift sailing over seas of light, through scud-
ding clouds of foam,
The tireless stars that seek no rest,
And white path leading out
Through whirling diamond dust, by rifts of dark,
To those eternal fields of space invisible;
That happy comrade of the shining face,
Heart of the Day, Life of the rolling world,
Whose faithful course
While untold ages drift and disappear
Is charted on the upper depths of blue:
These fine, celestial splendors are enough;

The largess that the fair Earth grants
From wanton joy of giving, is overmuch to hold;
Darkness and light, the pomp and endless train
Of Night and Day, the heavens are enough.

GOLD OF DAWN

Golden windows at morn,
And the earth is new-born!
Golden windows in the west,
And the young earth at its best.
Soft the wizardry of grace
In the pine trees' dawning face;
Sweet the ripple of streams,
Gray skies with pearl gleams
Are unfurling, unfurled.
Green trees from a strange world
(The hemlocks of dreams),
Mossy planes cut and curled,
With glints of strayed gold,
Seem new and yet old,
Unearthly, most fair,
Wrapped in mystical air
In the freshness of day
And shadowed with gray.
Skies of gray and shafts of gold,
Floods of gold and shafts of gray,
Interchanging, at play,
In the swiftness of day,
In the on-rushing day.
Golden windows at morn,
And the world is new-born!

ONE SPRING DAY

I think that he forgot, maybe,
To rise in the east from a purple sea
Of rolling clouds, in amber glory;
But the sun rose over in the west to-day
In sunrise lines of rose and gray,
And the fine footfall of May
Comes lightly down the April way;
Her feet are shod with silver shoon
Made from the horns of a crescent moon,
And the winds that follow on so fleet
In the sparkling trails of vanished gloom,
Are heavenly sweet
With the breath of early flowers a-bloom,
While the world is a heaving, trembling sea
Of sight and sound, and of Life to be.

SPRINGTIME

Song

Love's in the world!
His bright banner is unfurled
On your cheek;
And why will you not speak,
When the sun's riding high
In the sky,
And the little white clouds laugh together
In the clear weather,
And the bluebirds are mating,

Not a note of their love song abating;
The robins are all in a twitter,
The dewdrops in a fine glitter
On the grass
As you pass,
With the apple blooms falling around you,
My heart singing because it has found you.
Sweet, will you not speak
While Love's in the world,
While his rose-red flag is unfurled
On your cheek?

APRILLE

Fair, sweet Aprillè, wayward child
Of summer dawns and winter wild,
Comes dancing, smiling up the way,—
So long her coming, short her stay!

Soon follows on her welcome train,
Swift beams of sun and tender rain,
Warm, languorous days and frosty nights,
And blissful hints of vague delights
That fill the hazy atmosphere
With soft, dim promise of the year:

Promise that every hour is heard
In peep of hylas, trill of bird,
In silvery plash of loosened streams,
In quickened pulse and moonlit dreams,
In lights that gleam through sudden showers,
In primrose skies and primrose flowers;

In willows clad in golden gray,
In violets' eyes upturned to day,
In shadows on brown, furrowed earth,
In budding trees, and wondrous birth
Of the green grass that slips along
O'er all the ground to time of song.

O sweet Aprillë, darling child,
Could we but tame thee, heart so wild,
We'd hold thee for a longer stay,
And hear thy promises alway.

INVITATION OF THE MORNING

Madrigal

O come with me, the morning calls,
Come out from towering city walls,
To dancing step and singing rhyme
And far-off flutes of morning time.

Come hither, Love,—with hand in hand,
Now enter we another land,
Where light falls down in golden rain
On glades where spotted deer have lain;

Where silver bells on little trees
Are ringing, singing, in the breeze,
And laurel crowns I'll deftly twine
For thy dear head, O Love of mine!

Drink deep the wine of life to-day
Down where the running waters play,
Where happy thrushes are in tune,—
O come with me, my Rose of June!

Age after youth, death after life,
Time's wheel brings sorrow, joy, and strife
But life is now, and life is best,
Drink deep the joy, forget the rest.

Pale Yesterday was sore betrayed,
To-day flies free and unafraid;
Now know we not the veiled To-morrow,
Her pearls of grief we may not borrow.

Now happiness lurks everywhere,
Soft clouds run by in fields of air,—
Small sheep are they that Love displays;—
Come, shepherdess of milk-white days,

Come tend your flock where birches green
Shade banks of moss and flowers between;
Come where the running waters play,
For Life and Love are one to-day.

THE LAKE

Beside the lake I'll sit and watch until the lingering day is done
The little dancing fleets go by, of silver sparkles
in the sun;

One little silver fleet sails by, and then goes onward out of sight,
And others pass on endlessly, straight through
the blinding, shining light.

Upon the narrow, shallow shore, the fluent waves
that come and go
Are making golden lace reflections on the pebbly
sands below;

The water spiders jump and dive down with
their bubbles, then they float,
Their concave water shoes so quaint like shiny
paddles to a boat.

The scattered flocks of fleecy sheep are lying in
the tranquil sky,
While down below beneath the lake yet other
small white sheep do lie.

WHERE RUNNING WATERS FLOW

In shelter of an ancient mill I'll build a roof of
hemlock bark,
And there I'll stay through shining suns, and then
through rains and wintry dark,

And listen to the constant rush of water over dam
and rock,
Where thought is lost in restless whirl, just like
a floating stick or block,

Caught in the swift, wild eddying tide, borne
onward with tumultuous flow,
That endlessly through sun and storm pours down
the darkening gorge below;

Where winds and waters sweeping by chant
mighty diapasons deep,
In solemn tones of ebb and flow that lull the
brain to dreamless sleep.

Some day I'll build a wattled hut, and dwell
beside a singing stream,
To hear at night the chiming waves, far sounding,
ringing in my dream;

To rest me in its quiet bed, and let soft ripples
kindly flow
Around me with their gentle splash, and sweet,
continual murmuring low.

O running stream, dear rippling stream, come
near and sing a song to me,
Thou limpid waters, swiftly flowing, flowing ever
to the sea;

Sing of the laurel-shaded springs that shine as
clear as truest eyes,
Bordered with dewy moss and fern, and bluets
fallen from the skies;

Sing of the winds in willow trees that blow in
waves of light along
The countless, bending, whitened boughs, the
winds that breathe a whispering song,

And play all day with yellow birds and little gray
and olive leaves,—
The winds that toss the glinting hair of brown-
eyed maid with brodered sleeves;

Sing of the pastures rich in bloom, where butter-
flies whirl in the sun,
Above the flowers of St. John, transformed from
winter's bronzy dun

To living, quivering gold and green, of interwoven
masses low,—
A net to hold the wandering flash of every sun-
beam's brightest glow;

Where large-eyed cows like timid deer stand
knee-deep in the waving grass,
And turn their long, reflective gaze on all the
merry folk that pass;

Where speckled trout are darting by over the
clean white gravel bed
Of running brooks and shadowy pools; where
bees are droning overhead;

Sing of azaleas bending down along the water
lanes to drink,—
Fair-petaled snow-wreaths flushed with rose;—
there is no other flower, I think,

So lovely and so white and pink, so darling and
so honey-sweet,
Threading the tangled way of stream for many
miles with dainty feet;—

I'd dwell within their greenery as safe as any
dryad of old,

Transplanted to these later days from out the
happy age of gold.

O running waters, whispering wind, sing ever
on so soft and low,
And floods outpouring loud and deep, sing always
with your endless flow.

THE MESSAGE

Serenade

Sail on! thou swift and silent moon,
Through changing clouds of silver light:
Be not too swift, but stay thy flight
The while I ask of thee a boon.

Look down, I pray, from heights above,
Diana of the shining bow;
Let thy unerring shafts fly low,
Thy arrows tipped with moonbeams
white,
To bear this message to my love:

For me the murmur of the pine
Through the still, perfect summer night;
For thee the waters lapped in light,
For thee the surge of restless sea.
Though time and space have fought for thee,
They cannot part my love from me;
While earth rolls on and stars still shine,
My soul is thine and thou art mine!

EVENING PRIMROSE

Now the pale primrose offers up
Her precious golden cup,
Whence pure and heavenly odors flow.
(*Golden censers from heaven swing low.*)

Daughter of cloudy days
And quiet, untroubled ways,
Tall priestess of the Night and the still
moonlight,—
Her seven vestals without blame
Hold the seven golden candlesticks aflame.
(*A wind from the mist, a little young wind, is
singing, singing low,
Sweet airs of heaven blow,
Golden censers from heaven swing low.*)

THE DARK

Belovéd Children of the wandering Air,
Spirits of twilight and the mist,
Fan me with rush of gossamer wings,
And sing to me thy cradle songs of dream-
less sleep;—
Wild elemental cadences
That rise and fall, and come and go,
And pass away, beyond, afar, in finer strains
Than those vibrations that record their rune
Upon the wind-swept harp of mortal ear.
Come and possess my soul,
O hovering, brooding Presence of the Dark,

Stealing upon the spirit unaware,
Softly enfolding with the wings of Night.
Let gentle sighs waft down from murmuring
 pines,
And breathe their tale of winds and waves
And mysteries old,— more ancient than the
 earth:
Wrap me within thy heart of rest,
O Presence of the Dark,
That broods upon the troubled waters of my soul,
Bringing from tumult, peace.

A SUMMER NIGHT

Pale flowers of evening scent the cool, wet night,
Dark gleams from evergreens flash back the
 passing light,
Clouds part, revealing to the sight
One large, lone star, remote and calm and bright,
Set high to watch and guide our dreams aright.
Fresh odors rise from the damp earth, from filmy,
 fragrant ferns,
The springy turf yields to the tread,
The slender fingers of the pine shake down upon
 the head
Great drops of benediction. Nature yearns
And ever turns
With outstretched arms and heart that burns
In flame of tender love, to clasp her child,
And soothe to rest and sleep with notes both
 sweet and wild.

THE MUSHROOM LADY GOES

Mourn, streams and lanes and forest walks,
 The Mushroom Lady goes;
She leaves behind the changing wood,
The yellow ferns, the autumn wind,
The hills in winter's purple veil,
 The falling of the snows;
May kind fate send her back before
 The coming of the rose.

SPIRANTHES

Pale, pure Spiranthes, faintly sweet,
From twisted stem looks up to greet
The wayfarer, where grassy lanes
Are cushioned soft for wandering feet.

IN THE TENT

The wild black horses of the night,
Those steeds of wind and rain,
Sweep on in dark, tempestuous flight
Across the little plain,
That lies within the mountains' arms,
So gently lapped in vain.

Far, far away, like moan or sigh,
They come as breakers roll;
With whistling shriek they rush on by
Down to the raging shoal;
Down the dark gorge they disappear
And quiet for a breath is here.

Still on they come and on they go,
These troops of wind and rain;
The lantern flares and flickers low,
The stay-ropes creak and strain;
The tent roof flaps with angry blare,
Thunder gods roar with pain.

The storm is over, fresh air sweeps
In from the outer night;
Peace passes by and slumber keeps
Fair guard with dreams of light;
The angry blast has ceased to rave,
And we are safe and warm;
"None but the brave, none but the brave,"
The brave deserve the storm.

THE SWALLOW

Song

Swallow, to the home of the South Wind, my
swallow,

Why dost thou linger in the cold, whirling blast ?

Gather thy flocks, fly onward, fly fast,

Fly to the wide river, O iris-winged swallow,

And the day that thou goest then I will soon follow.

Fly to my little one, O shining swallow,

My little one with the heart of fire, my love,

With the spirit of dew and the eyes of a dove;

By this thou wilt know her, swallow, my swallow,

And whenever thou findest her I will soon follow.

Fly to the orange groves, bright Autumn swallow

The petals are falling on her bonny brown hair,

The light winds are kissing her flower-face there;

Flutter and tell her, dear messenger swallow,

To the land where thou fliest there I shall soon
follow.

Sweetheart, he flies to the South, the bright
swallow,

And my heart flies after him out of my breast,

Flies swiftly to thee like a bird to its nest;

O sweetheart, O true heart, watch for the swallow,

To the land of the shining wings I shall soon
follow.

A NOVEMBER DANDELION

Flower of stars, O heart of gold!

Clinging to earth in fading grass,
Careless of all the biting cold,

Unheeding wintry winds that pass.

Gone the spiral stairway's trace

Where the white spiranthes climbed,
Gone the strange, pure saffron's grace,
Following where the frost bells chimed.

Indian summer's in the air;

A belated butterfly,
Little knowing time or care,
In the sunshine flutters by.

Swiftly cometh frozen night:

Flower of stars, to dreams return,—
Goldfinches in beams of light,
Skies that smile and suns that burn.

FRIENDS

The wild hare leaps before my door,
In the sweet grass I find her form,
Her nest with babies brown and warm;
The squirrel keeps his nutty store
In the tall tree above my seat,
The tracks of little bounding feet
Mark all the snowy front-door path;
The startling zizz-z of mimic wrath

Is heard from Carolina wren,
That dashes into homes of men,
Unknowing the way out again.
Pet cats, well trained in righteousness,
Curl in the sun, where snowbirds bless
The air with whir of cooling wings,
While Signor Catbird tilts and sings.
The phoebe, curious and demure,
Sits looking in my window, sure
Of safety and of comradeship;
The thrasher eats the softened bread,
The catbird stands upon his head
With many a nervous dip and flip
To steal my pokeberries; unknown
It is to him that flower was blown
And sturdy stalk and branch were left
For just this gentle, winsome theft.

The Golden Calf, whose beauty wins
Free title to her many sins,
Tosses the heaps of fresh-raked leaves
With mischief in her eyes; nor grieves
The mistress of this pampered beast
At wanton wreck of labor spent,
For from the greatest to the least
The *beasties* all pay willing rent
In love and service, well content.
With friendly word of tenderness
My face I hold in fond caress
Close to the bay mare's velvet cheek
(She only lacks the power to speak),

And reckless of a future schism
Propound the newer catechism;
Ask, Why was man placed here below?
To love the creatures, that I know,
And make them happy as they go!

IMPRESSIONS

I. November Days

Swift morning rays reveal a world transformed,—
The jeweled glitter of fine frost upon the tree,
The bush, the brier, the bending weed,
In bluish silver of the glistening grass,—
One moment here, then gone like lightning flash.

* * *

Far distant fires create a wreath of haze,
A pale blue smoke over the wreath of hills,
Weaving a thin, transparent veil on everything
that is;
A world invoked by Merlin's wand, intangible,
unreal,
That may at any moment disappear.

* * *

The dead-leaf brown and soft pale yellow of
perfect fallen leaves,
Piled thick in rustling carpets on the ground,
Absorb and quietly reflect the mellow light of
afternoons
From slanting sunshine through the sleepy wood-
lands bare.

* * *

Pine needles in dull gold cover the trodden earth
And kindly cushion all the seats,
Inviting lazy folk to loaf:
And here and there a faint, elusive scent, like
 heliotrope,
From sweet decaying wood and fragrant drying
 grass,
Comes borne in sudden, unexpected waves on
 the cool air.

II. November Eves

The orchid skies of still November eves
Play harmonies of color up above,
While down below small, dear familiar birds
Come homing back to sleep in shelter of the friend-
 ly roof:
These flowers of heaven fade; swift silence and a
 sudden dark
Drop like a garment on the resting earth; then
 in a little space
The golden moon, a huge, colossal moon, a proper
 courting moon,
Climbs up the branches of the trees and later
 says Good night, peeping between
Enormous soft white feathery plumes that reach
 across the sky.

III. November Skies

The orchid skies that flush the quivering east
Fling out their last farewell to the dying west
In long celestial petals of light rose,
Rose-purples, tender gray, and mauve (all tints
and tones divine,
Repeated on the earth in rarest flower and shell),
Faint yellow, golden brown, and softest fawn,
And down below in level lines
A hint and flicker of a beryl green.

A few brown withered leaves, alone, and bare
stripped boughs,
Stand still as to be etched
In outlines dark upon the trembling eastern
heavens.
In the cool gray north the thick blue smoke is
curling up
Against the rich green wall of towering pines,
While in the fleckless southern sky, long hours
arisen,
The solitary, small, round moon is riding high,
Quite pale with love for the departing sun.

IV. A December Dawn

The finger of soft silence on the sleeping world
Enwrapped in veils of mist;
Long lines of dimmest gray and dreams of rose;
A little thin-lipped, curving moon, a tenuous
thread of floss,
Companioned by the glorious morning star, and
following on,
A baby star just faintly breathing light
In yonder regions of the outer space:
All stillness waiting for the lingering morn.

AT NIGHT

No star-beam trembles down the skies,
The moon withholds her light;
The velvet hand of Night
Is laid upon the weary eyes,
While the vexed soul is folded calm
Beneath the brooding wings of Dark;
And Silence, in her passing fleet,
Leaves on the trail of silvery feet
Soft winds of odorous balm,
And distant, sweet Eolian strains,
Those evanescent, lost refrains
Forever wandering on the air,
To find some heart in waiting there.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE FLUTTERING WINGS

In that fair land upon the other side,
All in the soft springtime the people go
To their belovéd cherry blossom fêtes,
Where small pink petals shower down to earth
Like storms of butterflies, while on the boughs
Are pendant scrolls writ o'er with springlike
thoughts,
For flower-decked maids in rainbow robes to read.
No cherry blossom festival have we;
Our feast in cold and stern midwinter comes,
And scrolls are writ full large in hieroglyphs
Of seed and meal on many a window ledge,
For little people of the air to scan.

* * *

The feast is spread upon the window ledge:
The white-winged snow falls down most silently
And softly in large flakes, like many small
White birds that fly to earth; the snowbirds come
With fluttering wings, alighting on the tree,
The little tree that is their resting place,
Their fluffy feathers white like heaps of snow
Upon the limbs; they come in endless flight,
Blown through the air and dropping down to
earth,
As swift and silent as the falling snow:
Then to their feast upon the window ledge,
With pleasant chirp and long, uplifted look
To peer in through the glass; with hairlike trills

And runs, and little jostles and short flights,
And flutter of small fans that open and shut,
As they keep coming, going, changing place,
A soft, bewildering whirl of drifting birds
And falling flakes, a storm of downy breasts,
Swift flights of feathered snowflakes through the air;
The happy festival of fluttering wings.

TWO MORNING PICTURES

I. Winter

Snow on the ground, snow on the trees, the pines
And hemlocks huddled close for warmth and
company;
The near-by laurels tall and old, their few leaves
dark and glistening,
Their twisted limbs turned gray with ancient
lichen, white with snow.
Big with their fluffed-out feathers and sitting
all in rows,
For once in voiceless hush, eight calm, contem-
plative blue jays,
Their soft gray breasts turned facing to the east
to greet
The level rays of morning sun and feel their
warmth.
O harmony of white and blue and gray!
Soft gray and white on breasts, in little clouds above,
In shadows on the snow, in lichens on the laurel
limbs;
White feathers of the bird, white feathers of the snow,

Both lightly piled on evergreens; a little turn of head
Or movement of the wings, a sunbeam's flash,—
And blue and purple filched from sky and sea,
From sapphires in the earth; the background still
Of mossy hemlock, slender tassels of the pine,
The dark and shining laurel leaves.

II. Summer

The morning hour, the upper room,
A call to look out of the window, and a window
framed
With tangled vines. Beyond, the grass; above, the
boughs of oaks
That reach to the blue sky; just underneath, a
little garden spot,
All wreathed about outside with shrubs and tall
perennials
Like fond, protecting arms,
And safe within, some beds of flowers bordered
round
With a low and mossy sedum in rich green;
Everything freshly washed in sweet night dews,
bright with the morning sun.
Pansies were there, all radiant, rich velvet pur-
ples and dark blues,
And clear, light china blues, with sprinkling of
bright gold, maroons and deepest wines.
I looked below: within the charmed circle of the
pansy bed,
That fairy ring of mossy green, were five blue jays,

Blessed with a virtuous desire to add to this rich
wealth
Of glowing color, all their fair fortune of infinitely
varying blues,
From darkest shade to lightest tint, their dashes
of black and white
And cloudings of tender gray; while pressing close
about,
Dreamy and wondering, were velvet pansy faces
looking up
In mild astonishment;—a choice mosaic, jewel-set,
Right in the very heart of all the summer's greenery.

A SOUND OF THE NIGHT

I leaned far out into the night, to seek
A wandering sound, a small ghost of the air.
The dimmest starlight shone,—more like a glim-
mering dark,—
The fresh, damp wind swept by,
The rush of falling waters smote the ear and died
away.
It was the earliest morn in that late month
When winter dreams of spring,
Preceding by the hour the lusty crowing of the cock
And by the many weeks the swelling chorus of
the dawn.
The wingéd minstrels of the night seek other
climes,
They dwell not here;
And yet there came a note blown hither by the wind,

At first the faint, sweet shadow of a sound,
Brought forth at intervals from tall treetops
That climbed the hill beyond; a long and low
 melodious note,
A softly sliding, wavy curve of sound,
In tremulous uncertainty
From songster half asleep,
And faintly thrilling with the pulse of coming
 spring.
It melted away in night, a slight, elusive breath,
Quite fit for that fine ear which heard the growing
 of the grass.

It came again and many times again,
And at far distant intervals;
And now with tiny, tentative roulades and timid
 breaks,
In haunting sweetness like heavenly higher notes
Of violin, so tender and unutterable;
The very soul of gentlest love and longing:
Then thrilling sweeter still and clearer yet,
And sweeping through a fuller curve of song, always
 most soft and low,
That flowed on for a moment and each time
 was lost
In rushing winds and waters, their long pulsa-
 tions intermingled
In throbbing and receding waves;
Mighty recurrent waves of sound, half-silences,
 and lingering sleep.

A COBWEB OF PALE FIRE

The round, low-lying moon of early morn
Had reached its fullest splendor, and then shot
its beams
All through and through the branches of a tall
young pine,
And lo! a miracle; as if they were transformed
into the web
Of some gigantic spider, who for once
Had laid aside all laws of weaving webs,
And in confusion thrown the threads across;
Then with a flaming torch had touched
The last frail, lacy, lovely mesh with glittering
sparks and lines
Of palest golden fire.

TO THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Farewell! but not for long; I come again to thee!

Blue, heavenly blue, are thy far distant hills,
And distant far the heart that turns to thee;
No siren songs borne drifting on light wind
Nor beckoning arms that gleam through sunlit spray
Were ever soft-alluring as thy waving lines,
Tender, ineffable, mysteriously fair.

One who has long-time breathed the rarer breath
Of thy sweet air, fresh from the winds of heaven,
That thrills the blood like draught of amber wine,
Or dwelt beside thy forest broidery

Of myriad blooms flushed with the rose of dawn,
Loved thy primeval hemlocks and thy pines,
And thy great laurels in the shadowy ways,
Glistening with silver light beneath the moon;
Heard the wild, merry plash of mountain streams,
And wakened to the fluting u-o-lee
Of brown wood thrushes answering to the morn:
One who has climbed thy lofty mountain tops,
Sat with creative powers a little space
And seen the home whence wandering clouds go
forth;
Watched the sharp lightnings flash from peak to peak,
The chasing shadows and the shifting lights
Play on thy granite walls and verdant slopes,
Until the eye most gently led along
Rests yonder on the wide, unnumbered waves
Of distant hills, like far-off summer seas:

O such a happy one,
Who for these many years has lived with thee
And loved thee thus, may say to thee farewell
But for a time: the soul that leaves thee now on
wings of haste
Will be drawn back to thee again, as wandering bird
Returns to chosen haunts while life doth last.

Thou fadest from my sight;
Home, love, and distant hills all melt away
In softest lines of heavenly blue.
Farewell, O dearest hills, but not for long;
My heart turns still to thee; farewell, I come again!

DEAR MOTHER NATURE,
TAKE ME BACK

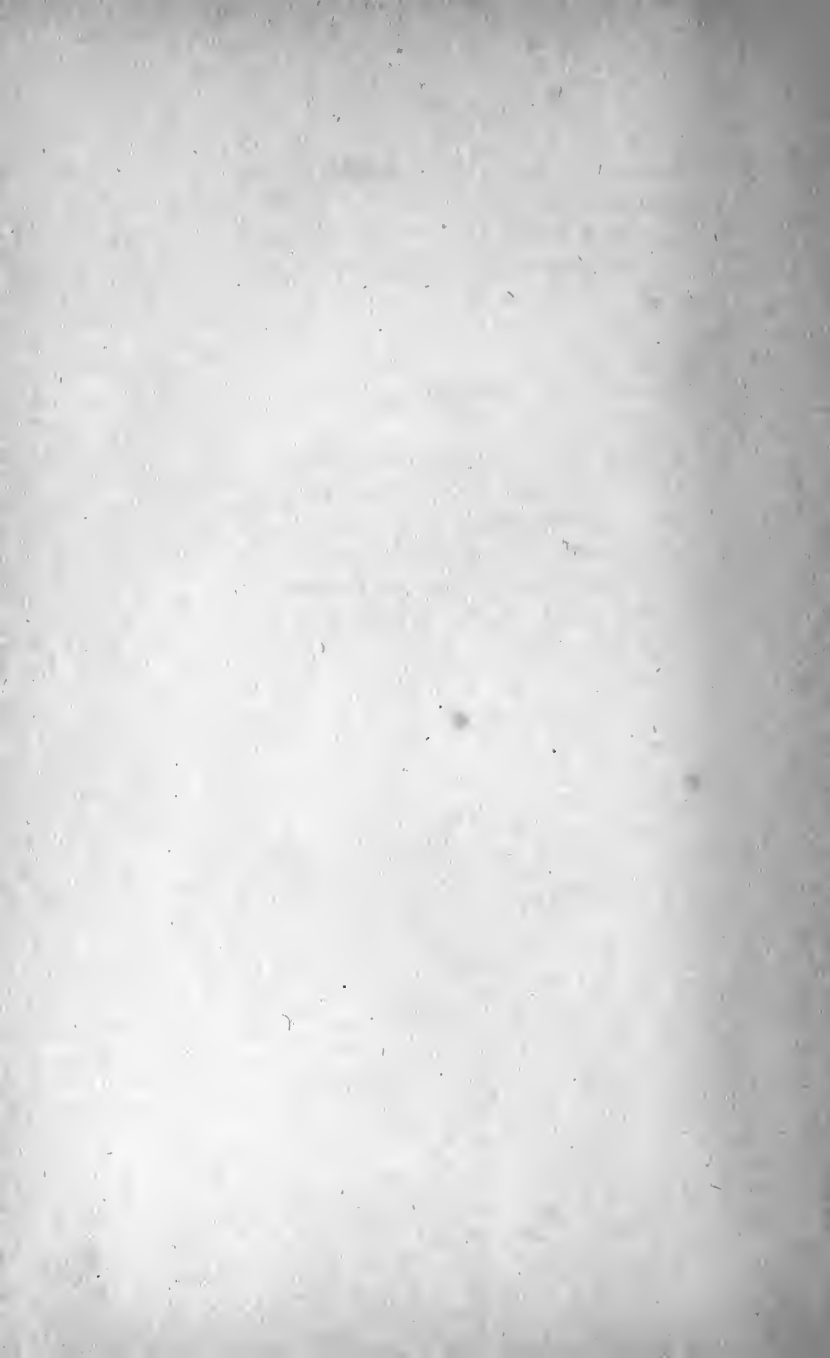
Great mother of us all, whose boundless state
Of rare delights and treasured golden lore
Thou ever dost reveal to those beloved,
Sweet mother, hear my cry, take me once more
On thy dear, cradling breast that in the days of
yore,
Those long-remembered days, has pillowed soft
thy child:
O mother, mother dear,
Who once was always near,
Why hast thou cast me off and why forgot?
The flowers have ceased to bloom for me, the
birds sing not,
The trees no longer whisper, and the stones
And little streams, they will not speak to me:
Thy child is sick at heart and wearied and dis-
traught,
All things have failed me now, all come to naught.

Dear mother Nature, take me back and hold
me fast;
Let wild, soft eyes
Keep kindly watch in mild surprise,
Let fine, sweet winds of heaven sing faint airs
Around my head; let fragrant pines that cast
Long, cooling shadows breathe their resinous
breath
Of healing near;

Blue sky and starry night,
The moon's pale, strange, transfiguring light,
Let them shine out and drive away all darksome
fear:

Thus cradle me and hold me fast,
And so I shall be thine at last,
With listening ear close to thy heart until that
day

When, earth to earth in still embrace, I shall be
thine alway.



EARTH SONGS

*Fear, sorrow, pain,—they shall but pass;
Joy comes, but withers like the grass;
What then remains?—remains the soul,
Still striving toward the final goal.*

Memory

*Within the unknown boundaries
Of an enchanted land, oh! far away,—
And looking out on sunny shores
Where white-foamed waters play,
Dim caves are faintly sounding
Sweet echoes from a bygone day.*



EARTH SONGS

LIFE AND LOVE

The springs of Life and Love lie deep,
They have one source; together shall those waters
 ever rise,
Together flow; for Love is Life and Life is Love.
The love of woman or of man,
The love of God or love of child or love of race;
The love of good or even love of ill,
Which often is the love of good but gone astray;
The love of birds and beasts, of the fresh earth
So old from everlasting, yet so young
With swift heart-beatings of eternal youth;
Or love of home and place, of sky and sea;
Or love of toil, the toil of body or of brain,—
Or love of children of that toil,
The dear results of labor, pain-begotten,
Or shadow-children of the brain and heart;
Or love of visions always fitting on
Beyond our grasp, and after which we ever run
 and pant
With aching arms outreached to clasp them close,
That ever us elude:
These our heart's Loves are but our Life;
Life without Love is Life-in-Death,
Love without Life,—that cannot be, for Love
 is part of Life,
Love intermixed and unresolvent, thrilling, puls-
 ing with the blood,
Love breathing with the breath, unconquerable,
Love all-enfolding, interpenetrating, informing
 the living spirit of all things,

Here, heretofore, and ever after
Through eons yet to come.

THE DEVIL'S HUNTING

The devil rides out a-hunting to-day
 With his hounds and servitors;
Their fangs are lusting for the feel of flesh,
They are hot with desire to snare and enmesh
My feet in their nets, their thirst to slake
In my heart's red blood; to rend and break,
To crush and slay as the devil may,
 The devil and all his servitors.

I will hie me forth to a tender wood
Where the shade is kindly and the light is good,
The light that falls in small gold coins
On beds of moss and banks of myrtle,
Fit for Maid Marian in her green kirtle.

I'll seat me within a fairy ring
 Mid a circle of scented fern,
And the devil may ride and twist and turn,
 But never will he learn
 The slightest trace
Of my velvet-green, deep hiding place;
For the little birds that are on the wing,
The little birds that light and sing,
They weave a circle in and out,
 Bird magic, there's no doubt;

A curtain of fine flutterings,
And soft, cool whir of silver wings,
 A murmur of heavenly things,
 With flashes of golden eyes
And gentle looks of kind surmise,
Songs and trills and shivers of bliss,
So sweet that the angels would not dare miss.

This curtain of sight and motion and sound
 Falls around
From blue sky above to mossy ground,
And the devil cannot ride within.
The bluejay drops his feather before
 The vine-embowered door;
When His Honor sees that, he may not pass,—
 Sure sign for him, alas!
That he may turn back the way that he came,
With his hounds and his servitors and his evil name,
To do his hunting and rend and slay
 On another day
And another way than this.

THE SINGING MONK

It was a legend old that like green moss
Clung round the cloistered walks and gardens fair,
Where long, long years ago the singing monk,
Whose heart was love and voice was wingéd joy,
Sang on until he passed from mortal sight.

His soul was filled with beauty of all time
And all things of all lands were his; for him

Old Pan played low the pipe while nymphs did dance,
Arcadian shepherds fluted to their sheep,
And festal feet pressed out the willing juice
From purple grapes; for him were blossoming buds
And nesting birds, and all the sweet delights
Of ever changing year; earth, air, and sea
Poured wealth of hidden treasure at his feet,
Until his happy soul, too full of bliss,
Cast bonds of silence off and bourgeoned forth
In long-restrained song, like century plant,
That after many years of patient growth
At last is crowned with bloom.

So while he trod
The quiet closure of the garden ways
Or labored tenderly with distant vines,
And laboring, ever sang unto the earth
And sky in soaring notes, exultant, sweet,
Like nightingale when singing to the rose,
The other monks would cease from barren toil
To hear the strains that stole away their hearts,
And filled them with a new, mysterious thrill
Not often found in monkish orisons.

And so he sang, and singing, disappeared,
The far sounds floating back from sunlit trails
Of mist as he went on. Since then, whene'er
A nightingale in his excess of joy
Fills all the fragrant, palpitating space
Of the still night with liquid melody,
The listener near oft-times will cross himself,
And whisper low, "It is the singing monk."

THE SEEKER

All the days,
Far wandering she went, with wide, sweet look,—
Heart-set upon the weary, immemorial search
For that which is not here,
That claims the Earth-born, spirit-led;—
While ever winds blew cold,
And blinding mist drove on her eyes.
But now, even this hour,
She fell upon the open way that streamed awhile,
A narrow lane of light from Pleiades.
For that we loved her well and longed to keep
her face,
We drank to her in cup of rue
And sped her on with tears,
The deep, slow chiming of the bells, and,
thickly strewn,
The fragrant flowers of grief. .
How she fared,
Whether the golden apples of the Hesperides
Or ruby blaze of Sanígreal rewards her quest
(For she was bred of Earth and Flame),
We have not heard.

ONLY IN DREAMS I SEE THEE

In dreams I may possess thee,
In dreams my heart is thine;
In dreams thy soul comes near me
And answers back to mine.

Only in dreams I see thee,
Thou art not of the earth;
These arms shall never clasp thee,
No land has given thee birth.

Thou art a shape of hopes and loves,
A vision of the air,
A frame of high imaginings,
Of tenderness and care.

No form compact of mortal flesh,
No locks with golden gleams,
Can ever hold my heart away
From this dear maid of dreams.

A ROOM IN JUNE

A place of sifting sunshine, gold-green lights
That play with shadows; of moon-haunted nights;—
The heart of peace and rest;
A cool, green, leafy nest
Of vines uplifting in the wind that blows
And carries with it sweetness from the rose,
The spicy, silvery-carmine rose of June;
Sweetness that ever is in tune
With flute-like melody of song
At dawn-time, even-time, and all day long
From brown wood thrushes in the thickets near;
Dear, gentle birds that have not learned to fear,
Dear song from heart of joy close to a tear.

TULIPS

In brave array they stand serene;
Nor heat nor cold, nor fire of frost
Disturbs their free and radiant mien;
Through all spring's cruel holocaust
No spot has marred their silken sheen.

Their shape is like a Grecian vase,
A curve of beauty, fine and bold,
Suggesting by its subtle grace
Long-buried urns now worn and old,
Rare keepsakes from that elder race.

Their leaves are wavy like the sea,
Their color as the heart of flame;
Through weary days they speak to me
Of that fair garden whence they came,
Of days that nevermore may be:

Of vines upon a sheltering wall,
A long, straight path, the scent of box;
Of gracious women, stately, tall,
And gossamer girls with flying locks,—
Young butterflies;—ah! past recall.

And still they sway on slender stalk,
And with a subtle air retrace
The beauties of that garden walk,
Restore that lady's winsome face,
Her starry eyes, her sparkling talk,
The maidens in bewildering grace,
The glamour of that garden walk.

LIFE

The skies are blue, the boughs still green,
The vines with crimson drest,
The birds are singing in the trees,
My heart sings in my breast;
But the winds that stir among the leaves
Fill my soul with a faint unrest:
For now the winds tear down the leaves,
They sweep and swirl and scatter them,
They work their own behest;
And the thoughts that flit across my brain
Fill my soul with a deep unrest.

The year is fair, the year is ripe,
But the year will soon be dour;
November rains will soon fall fast,
Her skies no longer lure:
And youth is gone;—with hidden face,
As one who yields no further grace,
The wraith of age inexorable
Slips by with flying feet,
Swift as the blast that whirls the leaves,
Chill as November sleet.

As this gray specter flees from sight
Dark sadness falls like rain,
And sudden questions pierce my heart;—
Will age be cold and drear as night,
A gloom which sets the soul apart,
Dead joys, lost hopes, and bitter pain,
Or a thrice blessed presence bright,

A spirit fair, whose inner light
Time strives to dim in vain?

A crimson leaf still hangs atwirl;
The winter boughs have birds
That flit and preen, and chirp and sing
Songs sweet as any words;
So the harsh winds may rave and rack,
My soul sings with the birds.
December skies are often blue,
December clouds are fair;
And farther still the eye can reach
Through winter's purpling air.

O life is good, and life is sweet,
Her willing hands are full of dower;
Her gifts, she cannot take them back;
More years mean greater power.
So hail to her and all she brings,
Love, sorrow, joy, and wider vision;
Drink health to life in life's clear wine,
And toss the dregs out in derision!

O WIND FROM WESTERN SKIES

Song

O wind from western skies,
Blow over the grass-scented meadows low;
In faint, rosy clouds the day now dies,
With ripples of sound the small brooks flow;
My lady comes,
My love so sweet,
Blow strains of fine music around her feet,

Let every elfin breeze
Float petals down from blossoming trees
Where the white clovers dwell with the golden
bees;
Blow a morrow of sunshine through the quiver-
ing air,
Bring hither kind joy, nor remember dull care.

Wild winter winds, blow fast
Through raging storm, through snow and
rain;
Sweep all before your mighty blast,
Leave wreck and terror in your train:
My lady dear,
Thou art so near,
All folded safe and warm within my arms and
heart,
'Tis sunshine of the summer where thou art:
Blow on, wild winds, ye cannot reach our nest,
Your threatening terrors do not pierce my
breast.

Blow, winds, and do not rest,
And weep, sad winds, that Death has found
our nest;
The bough was broken and the bird has flown:
Draw nigh and wail and sigh about the hearth
so lone.

All ye that hither come,
Bow low the head,
My lady's dead,

Like pale, closed violets are her soft eyes;
Down deep in the cold earth she lies,
 Under the heavy earth,
 Who once was warm
 And sheltered from the storm:
The birds that sang erewhile have now forgot to
sing,
The flowers no longer bloom and joy has fled;
Grieve, mournful winds, that time has given
 you birth,
And pray, ye sobbing pines,—my lady's dead.

COMPREHENSION

Smile of lip and gleam of eye,
Love an instant passing by,
Comprehension drawing nigh,
Now or never, who can seize it, who can find it,
With what subtle chains of feeling hope to bind it,
Hold this sparkling, thrilling moment as it flies;—
Words that quiver, thoughts that burn,
Heart revealing, man to man,
Will that moment ne'er return?
Bind it, keep it, ye who can.
Gone forever like the flash of summer seas
Or the silver edge of morning on the trees:
Ray of light and gleam of eye,
Rare, swift moment passing by,
No, they never will return;—
Nature is a hopeless cheat,
Hearts and eyes may not repeat.

THE COMING GUEST

One dolorous year and a day
Since Happiness went away,
When the skies dropped down in leaden gray;—
What sorrow none may say.

But now, since yesterday
(Sad Heart, O look for rest),
In panic, dark-browed Grief,
The ever ravening guest,
Makes ready to flee away;
For this pale, ashen jade, the unconsidered thief
Of iridescent hours, of malefactors head and
chief,
This tattered, sullen tramp of Hell,
This dour, unbidden guest knows well,
In all her shame and late distress,
That such as she with Happiness
May never hope to dwell.

For now, since yesterday,
I know (the wonder, who may say?)
That Happiness comes again this way:
For I hear the sound of her feet,
She is coming with step more fleet
Than the coming of April rain,
Awaking the buds that have lain
Under the wintry sleet;
And I hear the rush of her wings
As the murmur of waters afar,

As the carol of a bird that sings
In the dawn to the morning star;
And I see the blessed light that springs
From the rose and pearl of her heavenly wings,
That softly gleam like a silver bar
As she comes to me from a land afar.

She is coming, so fleet, so sweet,
And I may enfold her again
And kiss her elusive feet,
That fly from the sons of men;
I may hold her an hour and a day,—
If longer, who may say?
For her faith is but vain
As the flash of the April rain,
And her wanderings follow afar
The trail of that errant star
That comes and goes
With the year and the snows;
Though I coax her she may not stay,
Not even an hour and a day!

THE VOICES

One is singing all the night long,
One is calling in the wind song,
One is waiting all the day long,
Crying, "Come away!"

O the longing and the grieving,
Heart of me, 'tis soon I'm leaving,

O the weary night deceiving,
O the weary day!

For the restless heart of sorrow
Finds no solace in the morrow,
Finds no joy the night can borrow
From the sullen day.

Voices rustling in the green leaves,
Voices murmuring when the night grieves,
Voices sobbing where the sea heaves
Its white, quivering breast.

They are whispering in the pine trees,
They are wandering on the green leas,
They are moaning from the far seas,
Crying sore distress.

One is calling all the night long,
And I'm leaving with the wind song,
All the way the fireflies dim throng,
Leading to the rest
On the earth's cold breast.

AN OLD GARDEN

Thou old-time garden spot, from what fair land
Of memories dim dost thou come back to haunt
My soul with visions of thy peaceful ghosts
And all thy dear enchantments long since past?
Before me rise in faint, recurring shapes
The mysteries of thy labyrinthine paths,

Thy beds of round and crescent moons, box-edged,
And sweet with scent of other days and years;
With masses of cool hyacinths within,
Blue violets that play at hide-and-seek,
And lily-of-the-valley's hanging bells;
Forget-me-nots that dream of love and truth
Near jeweled musk that breathes of Araby the
 blest,
And crimson-spotted lilies brought from far Japan.

Snapdragon old and crown imperial
Were there, with monkshood grave and aster gay,
Soft foxglove and the wholesome marigold,
And polyanthus meek though velvet-gowned;
While close beneath the thickset, sheltering hedge
Of arbor-vitae green, crept myrtle banks
And southernwood, lad's love of men and maids.

Fair borders stretched their fragrant lengths along
Where mignonette and pale moss rose did grow,
With columbine, the honey-spurred, and balm
Beloved of wandering bees, and hollyhock
In silken dress; these were the old-time blooms
Whose ever swiftly changing colors made
The long and bright procession of the year:
And often midst these flowers, like butterflies,
Were many children of the village, free
To breathe fresh odors to their hearts' delight,
And hold their little hands out to be filled
All full and running over with these sweets.
Beyond were orchards, heavy with their fruit,

And grassy meadows sloping to the streams
That ran, twin threads of silver, through the green,
And every morning offered up their praise
In mists that rose to heaven;

While in the heart
Of this new budding growth, this throbbing life,
The owner of these purest summer joys,
That white haired man of will inflexible
And sad religion of most austere mold,
Blossomed with love of flowers and tender youth
As you have seen some dark gray granite cliff
All fringed with drooping ferns and starry sprays
of white.

CAVALIER AND PURITAN

The Cavalier was debonair,
And not for him was jealous care,—
The passing moment was too fair;
His hopes and loves, his joys and woes,
Were like a full-blown damask rose;
The tides of life ran swiftly there,
Rose-red they blushed on cheek and flower.
The Puritan, sternest of men,
Though solemnly the passing hour
Tolled Life and Death from tall church tower,
Though winter moons might come and go,
For him the springtime breathed again
And flowers of love bloomed rarely then,
The while he watched the mayflowers blow
All rosy-sweet by a bank of snow.

BELOVED GHOSTS

Dear, silent ghosts of sounds that come no more,
The dying footfalls on the echoing floor,
Dear, shadowy people ever gliding through
Deserted halls and fading from our view;
They wander in and out, finger on lip,
Dim forms inscrutable, that cannot slip
One little word, only a longing gaze,
For all remembrance of earth's tender ways
They dwelt among, those other happy years;
A tremulous sigh, thin gleam of pearly tears,
Light sorrow mid their joy that past all reach
Are human love, soft tones of human speech:
Then on through distance gray, through waver-
ing wall,
They fade, like olden song with dying fall.

Fair, spacious chambers stand in loneliness,
Where sweet bells faintly tolled lure from duress
Those evanescent shades of filmy air
That crowd in weaving, shimmering throngs,
most rare
Presentment of the forms held safe apart
Within the close-shut petals of the heart,
—Like honey-bee in center of a rose,
Well guarded from each wanton wind that blows,—
Where we may keep the holiest and the best,
Those who have ceased from toil and found
their rest:
Yet still they strive with tender, wistful arms,

And longing look and quivering alarms,
To reach us, fold us in beloved embrace,
As we fold them and find but hollow space.

Far sounds of ancient harp, and, long-time mute,
The voice of spinet and of silver flute,
The song of maiden slumbering by the stream
Whose gentlest flow may not disturb her dream,
The sacred lullaby from mother-heart
Of heaven-born child in manger laid apart,
Fragments of prayer first said at mother's knee,
The little dreams, falling from dreamland-tree,
These, lightly floating, trembling through the air,
Without, within, beyond and everywhere,
Are lost in night with fading forms so dear;—
Only frail cobwebs, empty doorways here,
Cold, watery shafts of moonlight through the
panes,
Dear footfalls vanishing like springtime rains.

MY SAINT: C. L. C.

The still, soft splendor of thy face,
Like diamonds set in platinum,
With mildest sparkle, winning grace,
Gleams out in pale moonbeams that come

To play within thy silver hair
And flow in glittering halo round,
While with caress the charmed air
Moves gently by without a sound.

Thy perfect head,—O blessed sight,
Like some sweet saint with loving eyes,—
In beauty shines upon the night,
Where light against the shadow lies.

The small, straight nose is comely yet,
The tender mouth breaks in a smile,
The crowding years may still forget
The peace upon that brow awhile.

In slender shape thy spirit fine
Burns clear through every glowing curve,
Like silver lamp in holy shrine
Of alabaster, set to serve

Gray pilgrims praying in the night,
Dust-worn and laden with their grief:

* * *

O lovely pilgrim, heaven's light
Has given thy sorrow glad relief:

O fair and sacred one, Christ love
Thee ever as thou hast loved me,
And may he always kindly watch
The days that lie 'twixt me and thee.

THE VICTORS

The wind is singing, for the night is o'er,
The night of battle and the tempest's roar;
The bells are ringing, for the night is done;

Now praise to Jesu, and his name adore!
With the salt foam dripping and wounded sore,
Death's pale sea-riders forevermore
Are driven afar, and the fight is won.

The bells are ringing, and the snow-white shore
Is just beyond, and the opal door
Is open wide in the dawning sun.

The night is fleeing, the day begun,
The hordes of Evil swiftly run,
And the victors kneel on the golden floor,

On the golden rim of the snow-white shore;
And they offer up their praise before
The face of him who forevermore
Is Light in darkness, Moon, and Sun.

The wind is singing on the curving shore,
For the hills of morning are just before,
And the breakers dash on the sunlit floor;
O wild sea horses of wreck and gore!
You may leap and strain, but nevermore
Will you reach the knights, whose battle is done.

The castle walls crown the hills that are won,
The walls are shining in the ruddy sun,
The palms are waving by the crystal run,
And the victors march through the opal door.

The wind is singing, for the night is o'er,
The bells are ringing from the curving shore,

The palms are waving by the opal door,
And the knights are crowned, for the fight
is won.

CONFESSION

Dear Lord, we daily cry to thee
As beggars asking alms,
Always imploring thee to fill
Our empty, uplifted palms;

Continually we turn to thee
From each hour's wrong and blight,
As children to kind parents flee
For refuge from affright.

We chant our litanies of wo,
Forgetting in our pain
That streams of countless blessings flow,
Free as the gentle rain.

Thy pardon, Lord, we now beseech,
And may we ever raise
Altars within our willing hearts
On which to offer praise.

TWO SOULS

Two mortals lived upon the earth;
Their bodies dwelt within one house,
Their souls were far apart; faults little worth
The heeding, and ever, from Love's birth,

Dull, stammering speech, thoughts held in
thrall
Of long accustomed silence, built a wall
High as the heavens between.

Two souls met in the upper air
And stood transparent; to their gaze
Each to the other then laid bare
All feelings oft concealed; thoughts flashed
swift rays
Like lines of fire at set of sun.
Said one:

“Thou art that soul for whom, those days
On earth, I long did seek and wait,
With yearnings lone, unutterable; my chosen
mate
Decreed from time’s beginning; now, though
late,
My heart has found its bliss.”

The other answered, “Down below,
Through all the saddened years,
So full of hopes and fears and tears,
Under the roof-tree of one house
We two have dwelt together, nor did know
That joy stood unrevealed between,
Waiting to grant the bliss
Which our lone, sundered hearts did miss.”

THE JERUSALEM CHAMBER OF THE SOUL

The days that pass, pass on again, o'erfull of
moil and strife,
That struggle old with things of earth that men
at times call life;
Like hapless ants disquieted that hurry to and fro
And clasp their burdens tight, nor think to let
them go,
So clasp we close our daily cares, nor ever let
Them grant surcease of one swift moment's fret,
Lest we might happy be,
And with our souls go free.

As some frail, tender bird, borne down at last,
Is beaten low to earth by angry blast,
Or torn by ravening dogs till plummy wing
Can never rise again nor sweet throat sing;
So like this piteous bird in cruel case,
Outstripped and broken in life's heartless race,
The lone white spirit that dwells apart within
Is torn and rent by the black hounds of sin
And care and trouble, greed and lust for gold,
Strife and deceit and misery untold.

O waiting angel of most gentle peace,
Come fluttering swiftly down with kind release;
Brood like a mother dove with sheltering wings
Until the wounded spirit soars and sings.

In some Jerusalem Chamber of the soul,
Long years forgotten, most remote and fair,
Take thine abode. Wide open to the golden air
Its eastward windows quickly throw; let in
Sweet murmuring thoughts like bees in fragrant
 linn,
The heaven's light, the long, low, slumbrous roll
From wash of far white waves in the eternal sea,
The Sea of all things hoped for Yet-to-Be.

SHADOW DANCE

*Fear, sorrow, pain,—they shall but pass;
Joy comes, but withers like the grass;
What then remains?—remains the soul,
Still striving toward the final goal.*

The light swings by, the torchlights fall
In golden flare upon the wall;
With wavering dance the shadows all
Fling lacy weavings on the wall.

They follow, follow,—forms untold,—
In arabesque on walls of gold,
In slender trellised arbors old,
In strange grotesque of human mold.

Soft, wistful shapes of grace aspire,
In beauty as a flame of fire,
Dim shadows of all earth's desire.

The shadows fall like quivering rain,
They pass and come and pass again;—
Seize them! put forth your strength amain!
For pleasure, lust of eyes, detain
This beautiful, fleet shadow-rain:
—As well to hold the wandering strain

Of song that musically drips
In mellow sound from those red lips,
As light that from the finger slips,
Or shadows ever in eclipse:

Light that, eluding, swiftly goes,
Shadows that melt like wreath of snows,
Vanishing as the wind that blows
The pale, strewn petals of the rose.

Hold fast the shadows of the night,
Or clasp that shimmering stream of light,—
Then hope by wish or will of might,
Love's divination, blessed rite,

To hold the spirit of thy friend,
That lone and fearsome thing to bend,
Or dream with it thine own to blend;—
A flitting shadow to the end.

It comes to meet thee as the light,
It vanishes into the night;
Elusive, glides within the sight,
Then steals away in mad affright.

* * *

Slow winding with the rhythmic grace
Of sacred dance on antique vase,
Mysteriously the shadows trace
Their silent way and changing place;—
Now faster, wilder in the chase,
With love-lit or averted face,

Quick! see their endless, whirling dance;
Blithe Song and Laughter, faery Chance,
Sorrow and Pain and Circumstance,
Dark, venomed Hate with dripping lance,
And leprous Ill in grim advance.

Again they come, again they pass;
Dear Love and Faith and Hope,—alas!
No more than moonlight on the grass
Hold we these shadows as they pass.

Young Joy comes piping at thy call,
With straight-limbed maidens, fair and tall;—
But trooping shadows, phantoms all,
Just passing shadows on the wall.

Black Lies, the toad, with monstrous sprawl,
Iron-handed Death, to hold in thrall
That which thou worshipest, thine all,—
Nothing but shadows on the wall.

* * *

What ill-bred fantasy is here?
What fateful Dance of Death is near?
But whirling phantoms,—never fear,
For Life is what you make it, dear,

And Death is what you make it, too:
Sweet Life, with Hope forever new,
The Christ to follow, love the true,
Stern Hate defying, with the blue

That shines above, it will suffice,
And thus we find our Paradise.
Through generations, at a price

We make our Heaven and Hell. O maid,
With look of dreams, yet unafraid,
Let not your courage be betrayed.
That ancient, transitory shade,
Older than Eve! the lights that fade
In dusky glooms on yon green glade

Are not more keen to pass. Be bold.
Though cruel, fleeting shades more old
Than earth, than driven mists more cold,
Steal dancing by the walls of gold
And disappear, still we hold

Our Heaven in hand; guard well: the drear
And dun, sad skies grow bright, we hear
Songs of the future drawing near,
The bonds are broken; Self and Fear,

Like trooping shadows, flee before
The Light that broadens more and more,
While Death is but an Open Door
Through which with wingéd bird we soar.

THE CONSTANT LOVERS

I. The Lament

Come back to me, sweetheart, in the wild gray
dawning,
When the wind shrills by in the pale yellow light,
Or come with the mist cloud that walks in the
night;
For long have we wandered, in morning, in
gloaming,
Far down the green forest ways hand-in-hand
roaming,
But now thou art gone in thy beauty and might,
And the wind harps are mournful that wail
on the night.

Down through the still valleys long were we
straying,
Over wind-swept hill places when skies were
star-bright,
By rivers that sang and through meadows of
light;
Through the snow-wreaths of winter, in the
spring's happy Maying,
Ever onward together where the west winds were
playing,
Hearing faintly Earth voices, fine runes of the
night,
Singing softly Earth heart songs, low sounds
of delight.

O where art thou, sweetheart, and where may I
find thee?

In the wild, raging storm or under the pine,
Beneath the warm earth or by lonely wood
shrine?

Art thou lost in the darkness, does the noonday
glare blind thee,

Art thou under the waters, have the cold waves
confined thee

In their prison so deep, below ripples that shine?

Art thou held in the night by wan spirits malign?

Thou wilt come again, sweetheart, in the wild
dawning;

Why art thou still silent, why givest no sign?

Though yonder pale star be the last home of
thine,

Yet soon I shall find thee, in morning, in gloaming,
Soon through the deep forest again we'll be
roaming;

By the wandering stream, by the sea's tossing
brine,

Wherever thou art, thou art mine, thou art
mine!

II. The Search

Through forests immemorial,
By reedy fen, in meadows pied,
Under the silence of the stars,
Across the lonely desert wide,

I long have sought, I cannot find;
Only the southing of the wind
Breathes answer from the waste unkind.

Beneath the wings of Night I go
To that far, frozen, glittering field
Where icy caves blue shadows throw,
Where streams of gold forever flow;
Or where the lone Himalayas yield
Strange vision from their crests of snow:
Then will I search through unknown seas,
In deep abysms of the earth;
Or do fair cities, heavenly leas,
In all the dim, unreckoned girth
Of Space Beyond, where stars have birth,
Hold thee a happy, willing guest?
Onward I go in sorrowing quest,
Like wind-blown leaf fast driven by,
With Pain and Terror often nigh;
Still ever on until the end,
Though Joy may be an unknown friend,
Though grief of years my brow has lined;
But when and where shall wandering feet
Bring me where Joy and Sorrow meet,
Where rest my bleeding heart may bind,
Heart of my Life, when shall I find?

MELANCHOLY

Sad, darkened pathways, faintly traced,
After the sun of joy has set,

Thread troubled vistas, interlaced
With tortuous limbs that never let
The light of hope shine through,
Despoiled of foliage that once graced
Their ravined, dying boughs; the rue
Of bitterness all that is ever seen,
In this most doleful spot, of earth's rich crown
of green.

Gray shapes of sorrows and of fears,
Of memories and of burning tears,
Haunt shadowy forests dank with dew;
Dim, silent forms uncertainly flit through
Between the saddened cypresses and yew
Planted o'er graves of visions long since dead;
The croak of the night-raven overhead,
And crimson drops of blood below
Expressed from the heart's juices, tell the wo
Of those who ever this lone way may go.

Beyond are foul miasms, slimy, creeping things,
Harsh flapping of great wings
From strange and songless creatures of the air,
Rank, noxious weeds of hatred and despair;
The deadly efflorescences of crime,
The poisonous, pallid fungi of all time;
Deluding marsh lights wane; the hollow boom
is heard

From some lone bird; while evermore
A sudden deep and angry roar,
Or fixed, unwinking glare of cruel eyes
With following look from out the gloom,

And moans and sighs and echoing cries,
Impel the wanderer distraught on to his waiting
doom.

Down, down they go, sad souls without relief,
Each moving on alone in voiceless grief,
Alone in shadow of their wo, too crushed to
weep,
Down to the black and bottomless pools of the
still deep,
Its sullen surface undisturbed by any breath,
Peopled by formless, moveless life-in-death,
Where poignant sorrow, minished happiness,
Swift, fleeting joy, and all calamities terrene, in
the last stress
Of life and time, obliterate themselves in one
quick leap
Beneath the silent waters of oblivion merciless.

CONTRASTS

I. Fate

A waste of lonely waters without a shore,
Wide, burning desert sands;
Grim giants that you meet
With helpless, shackled hands;
Deep pitfalls for blind feet;
The sphinx who sits in silence, and before,
Straight in your path, the awful cyclone's roar.

II. God's Care

The eternal listening of an infinite ear,
The sweet telepathies of wingéd minds;
Soft hovering of airy forms so near,
The careful weaving of blind destinies;
Safe sleep at night within a Father's arm,
A Father's care wherever we may roam,
With loving hand outstretched to save from harm,
And silken leading-strings to guide us home.

BENEDICITE

For all the ages past
When life was but asleep,
When monsters swam the deep
And held the earth,
When generations had their birth;
When forests grave, mysterious, in awful spaces
vast,
Reared sculptured pillars through the watery
air
Above the floor of rush and fern;
For thy great palimpsests laid bare
In rocks reluctant, old and stern,—
Grim records of heroic mold and slender line;
For all thy works so manifold, most rich, most
fine,
Fires on the altars of our praise shall ever burn,
O Lord above; praise for this wondrous world
of thine.

For all thy stars so fair
That shine through summer night,
For thy swift messengers of light,
The air, the winds that blow,
The waves that murmur low,
For odors sweet and sounds that chime through
ringing space,
For butterflies and flowers and birds that sing
their grace,
For stately greenwood tree and moss in grassy
sward,
For these thy daily gifts of earth and air, we praise
thee, Lord.

With tapestries the world's wide walls are hung,
Where magic figures faint and bright are woven o'er
The Web of Days, and shot with threads of
gold;
Shapes that depict the fabled mysteries of old,
And strange, beguiling histories with ardor told
In musty manuscript and tome;
The fireside tale of tribes that roam,
The chants that wandering bards have sung,
The garnered wealth and store of Time's most
precious lore

Since man possessed the earth.
Warriors and nomads, minstrels and sages,
Down through long ages
From tradition's earliest birth,
Send us the word. For messages of peace and
sword
That come to us, we praise thee, Lord.

For wholesome Toil we render praise, and for
the zest

And ardor of accomplishment, and after, welcome
rest:

We praise thee for the common joys so sweet
That gently, like gray doves, oft flutter round
our feet:

We praise thee, Lord of Good and Ill, for Grief
and Pain;

Sad sisters they, but sunshine follows after win-
try rain,

As a fond mother chides, then folds her child

In happy arms of love:

We praise thee too that out of Sin and Crime

There spring some flowers of Virtue; that
above

The dragon of the slime

Some bright and strong Saint Michael hovers
ready for the thrust

Which makes for the world's betterment;
and so,

That all these ministers of Life, most sad and stern,

Do oft against their lust,

Which is to rend and burn,

Serve purposes of thine, and speak thy word

To heart of man, we humbly praise thee, Lord.

AND AFTER ?

In that lone house where all things are forgot,

Where love is turned to dust,

Where hate is naught but rust,
Joy unremembered, power and grief forsworn
That silent house where friends come not,
Where living from the dead are torn;—
Look, there he lies,
Who once beneath her sunny skies
In joy and beauty walked the earth,
And ever from his birth
Of wealth and honor knew no dearth;
Now in the narrow house, down deep
Below the strife, below the happiness, the sleep,
Deaf to Love's piercing cry
Which cannot wake the dead,
Unheedful of the echoing tread
Of friend or foeman passing by,
Of life no spark, no faintest germ,
Food for the tree and brother to the worm.

* * *

The spirit, once so gay and debonair,
Through what uncharted seas, what strange,
dim ether rare,
Has it explored the way? Or does it sit
With sorrow bowed,
Where fires of remorse are lit
By torches of old revels? Or on a loud
And wailing wind does it pass by
Dear, well-remembered places with a sigh,
Still longing for the swift return of morn,
A hollow ghost, affrighted and forlorn?
Perhaps it dwells
With tender, holy loves of old

Beside sweet waters flowing to the sea,
In some enchanted land whose mystic spells
Of utmost beauty ever hold
The song of bird, the flower, the tree:
Or does it delve down far and deep
For records that the centuries keep,
Searching through all the heritage of time
For legend, science, rune and rhyme,
For knowledge, wisdom, truths untold,
Even as the miner seeks for gold?
What work falls to its lot,
What days remembered or what time forgot?
What dawn of love that fadeth not,
What rose of joy or sad gray rue of grief,
What calm for restlessness, of pain what quick relief?
The meed of bliss or doom of wo, who knows?
That mortal question since the sun first rose
On man: I wot not; only this, God knows.

THE SOUL'S QUEST

This night my soul fares forth alone
To enter realms of the Unknown:
My body, which I now deride,
Once my strong manhood's tower and pride,
Too long, like a usurping slave,
Has held my mind beneath the wave.
Now brought full low, to turn to dust
It stays on earth, as bodies must.

My soul, released this unquiet night,
Flies past the pale and watery light

Of a thin, aged, waning moon:
On, on it hastens, late or soon
To seek through cosmic fields of space
Beyond the star mists her whose grace
Of spirit lightly held the rein
Through the long years,—and not in vain.

I seek and I shall find her; then,—
But to break forth in song again,
Together ever to aspire
With ever growing hot desire
To conquer space and time, to read
The tale of ages, and to speed
With tireless wing toward regions far,
Beyond the dim, remotest star.

SALUT!

(*Alfred Dreyfus; July, 1906*)

Alone before the world he stands, white-haired,
Pathetic, grand; the patient victim for long years
Of bitter racial hate, of madness that like a
tidal wave

Swept over a great nation:
The scapegoat on whose inoffensive head
Was laid the burden of their secret sins,
By those ill souls of doom now fallen low
Into the final glooms of deep disgrace;
At whom the wagging finger of all time
Shall ever point in deadly scorn.

And he, who with colossal strength of will
Kept heart and brain in steady grasp
Through all the fires of hell,
And then, pain-scarred and marred,
Came to the sweet, fresh upper air again,
Back to the glowing fields of France;
He, once dishonored, smote upon, but late restored
To honors manifold, with upright soul rejects
The passionate satisfaction of revenge,
His fingers do not itch for any balm of gold,
His only thought for justice and for France,—
Still there he stands, heroic, undefiled,
Fit to receive the waiting honors of the world.
The world salutes thee, Dreyfus! thee, too, France!
Full many a weary year has her great heart
Longed for this hour; her veins throb fast with joy
At this large reparation, noble though late,
Sweet joy that France has come unto her own
again,
Her kingdom of the Truth, all robed once more
In goodly garments of unspotted white.

HORUS EVER WEIGHS THE NAKED HEART

Lo! for these many years I have said
That naught but bitter fruit could ever come
From wilding trees and barren soil.
It is not so.
Think not that black heredity and sad environ-
ment

Shall always drown the soul in mire.
As one may see a tender flower, most pure and
fair and white,
With silken petals frail that tremble to the kiss
of wandering wind,
And this flower springing up to heaven's light
midst trash and filth,
And closely intertwined with ugly weeds:

So have I seen a soul
Rise from the nethermost slime of sin that from
its birth
Encompassed it about, till later years
Brought it to higher ground;—for many grades
there be
Of misery and dirt and wickedness;—
And this soul opened out its petals fair
To every wave of influence from humankind
And the great heart of nature, so that it grew
Into a larger purpose, a wider generosity each day,
An eagerness and thirst for knowledge, a finer
use of brain
Applied to daily tasks; a passionate love
For all the outdoor world, with eye most quick
to see:
All this the fruit of barren soil, the flower of
mire and filth;
And if some darkening spots defaced its purity,
what then?
If but a single virtue come, like blossom white,
From this black ooze, thank God.

Soul, dare not judge.

Why look for wide-eyed truth and utter honesty,
And all sweet charity of speech and every other
virtue,

From those who never breathe the upper air?

One tiny bloom from thence shall far outweigh
A million fruits from richer garden soil.

Then where art *thou*, my soul?

Why boast thy petty righteousness, but borrowed
from

Some line of just forbears, some happy circum-
stance?

Naught will avail to wrap thyself in richest robes,
For Horus ever weighs the naked heart.

*"And On the Fourth Are Men With Growing
Wings."* *Tennyson: The Holy Grail.*

When once the gods made man

They put within him eyes that he might see,

They gave him little hidden wings to grow,

That he might soar into the sky;

They placed within his soul a little song, a bird
within a cage,

For him to set it loose and float it free

Upon the willing air of heaven.

In after days the gods looked down

Upon the earth to see what they might find: they
saw

A swarm of little naked men, all stooped and bent,

Their eyes fixed on the sand, from which they
picked
Small shining particles to hoard with greed,
And over which, these worthless sands, they ever
fought and snarled
With hoarse, discordant sound to gain possession:
Above them in the air were creatures with great
wings,
Wings grown for wrong and ill, for hate and wo;
Huge forms that made black shadows on the earth;
Foul shapes they were of dragon-men,
Forever casting down on men below
Strange fires that burned and ran
With fierce and twisting torture like consuming
fiends,
And bomb-like balls, that, bursting, spread afar
The stifling fumes of death,
Swift mowing down the helpless folk
As tender grass blades fall before the scythe.

But now and then among the little men
Were those who looked not down forever on the
sand,
But gazed on the green earth and flowers and trees,
And with full breath exultant cried
Unto their fellows, "Lo! the skies are blue;"
But these were deaf, they would not heed, and
still they looked
Upon the sand, nor ever even knew
How that the great, bright sun shone in the heavens:
While others then set loose the little songs within

their hearts,
Filling in some sweet places the air all full of
melody
As if from singing birds:
A few had grown their wings all shining like the
light,
And in the air were fighting with the dragon-men;
When these white souls prevailed sweet flowers
sprang everywhere,
While some with soaring wings drew down the
stars;
They were but few.
The gods looked on it all, they could afford to
wait.

So time went on;
And as the gods looked down from age to age
They ever saw more men that stood upright and
looked into the sky,
More men that gazed upon the grass, the trees,
the stars,
And fewer fought upon the sands, and fewer
dragon-men blotted the face
Of the bright sky with their foul wings; and little
bird songs flew about,
And ever sang themselves in places everywhere;
and men with flying wings
Shining as white as drifting clouds went floating
through the air,
And there were many such. The gods looked
on and smiled.

“Some day,” they said, “there will be more.
We can but wait.”

PEACE ON EARTH

The kingly splendor of the rising morn
Ushers the day on which the Christ was born;
The star is dimmed and set that shone erewhile,
But soft-eyed Peace with wistful, heavenly smile
And brooding wings yet hovers o’er the earth
As in that far-off day of wondrous birth,
With longing sweet, perpetual, in her embrace
to fold the world,
And see in all the teeming lands her silken ban-
ners fair unfurled.

CHRISTMAS CHIMES

Carol

Sweet as music of the spheres,
Chiming softly down the years,
Rang the song in mortal ears,
Christ is born on earth to-day.

Ring those happy chimes again,
Sing those peans now as then,
Christ has come to mortal men,
Let celestial trumpets play.

Crush the hate, the scorn, the strife,
Love and joy shall spring to life;



Now shall happiness be rife,
Peace on earth, good-will to men.

Christ the Lord comes down to-day;
In your hearts now let him stay,
Sing that happy song away,
Christ is born to earth again.

*Christ is born on earth to-day,
Let celestial trumpets play!
Peace on earth, good-will to men,
Christ is born to earth again.*

THE HOLY CHILD

The night was still and white
When holy Love came down,
And in the sacred manger laid
His little shining head,
To sleep his first soft baby sleep
In that sweet, lowly bed.
The Babe, the Wonderful,
The Lord of Life and Light,
Forgot his scepter and his crown,
Forgot the heavenly meadows bright,
And cooed and smiled and played,
And gazed in Mother Mary's face,
With all the lovely baby grace
And dimpled mirth
Of any happy child of earth.

And now the radiant mother holds
The glory of this wondrous child
Close to her breast, so warm and bare;
With gentle arms of love enfolds,
And veils him with her glittering hair.
What shadow of the future lies
Upon this holy pair?
And can it be the mother's eyes,
Eyes of gazelle, so softly mild,
Grow large with somber, frightened stare,
And rest upon a vision wild
Imprinted on the shivering air?

Watch kingdoms of the world forsworn,
The feeding of the multitude,
The water flushing into wine,
The stilling of an angry sea;
The sacred grove, the withered tree,
The little home in Bethany;
The Pharisee, who sits in scorn,
The woman, beauteous and forlorn,
By love's repentance torn;
The midnight watch, the thief, the cross,
Terror and flight and tears like rain,
The quaking ground, the skies that lower,
The blackness of the fatal Hour,
The rending of the Veil in twain.
Love living, dying, for the world,
Love's agony for thee and me,
For mine and thine,—O Love Divine!—
Love reaching down through endless years,

Love giving joy, Love quelling fears,
Love going with us all our days,
Love leading through the darkened ways.

O child of heaven, Holy One,
Desire of Nations come to earth,
Light of the World and Life of men,
We hail the glory of thy birth;
With shepherd and with Eastern mage,
On bended knees we fall,
Adore thee, O thou Wonderful,
Thou everlasting King of Kings,
And love thee ever best of all.

QUATRAINS

I. Threads of Gold

Is thy Soul's Room most dark with inward strife
And draped in gloom with tattered grays and old,
Then turn to glowing day the Web of Life,
And find it shot with rose and threads of gold.

II. Time's Arrows

Time's arrows piercing through the armored hide
of years
May often find some vulnerable spot;
And after careless ease thick fall the tears
That death on time's fair page should leave one
bitter blot.

III. Glorias

The tender Glorias of the day
Are morning mist, soft evening air;
For praise the bluebird's matin lay,
While bending grasses bow in prayer.

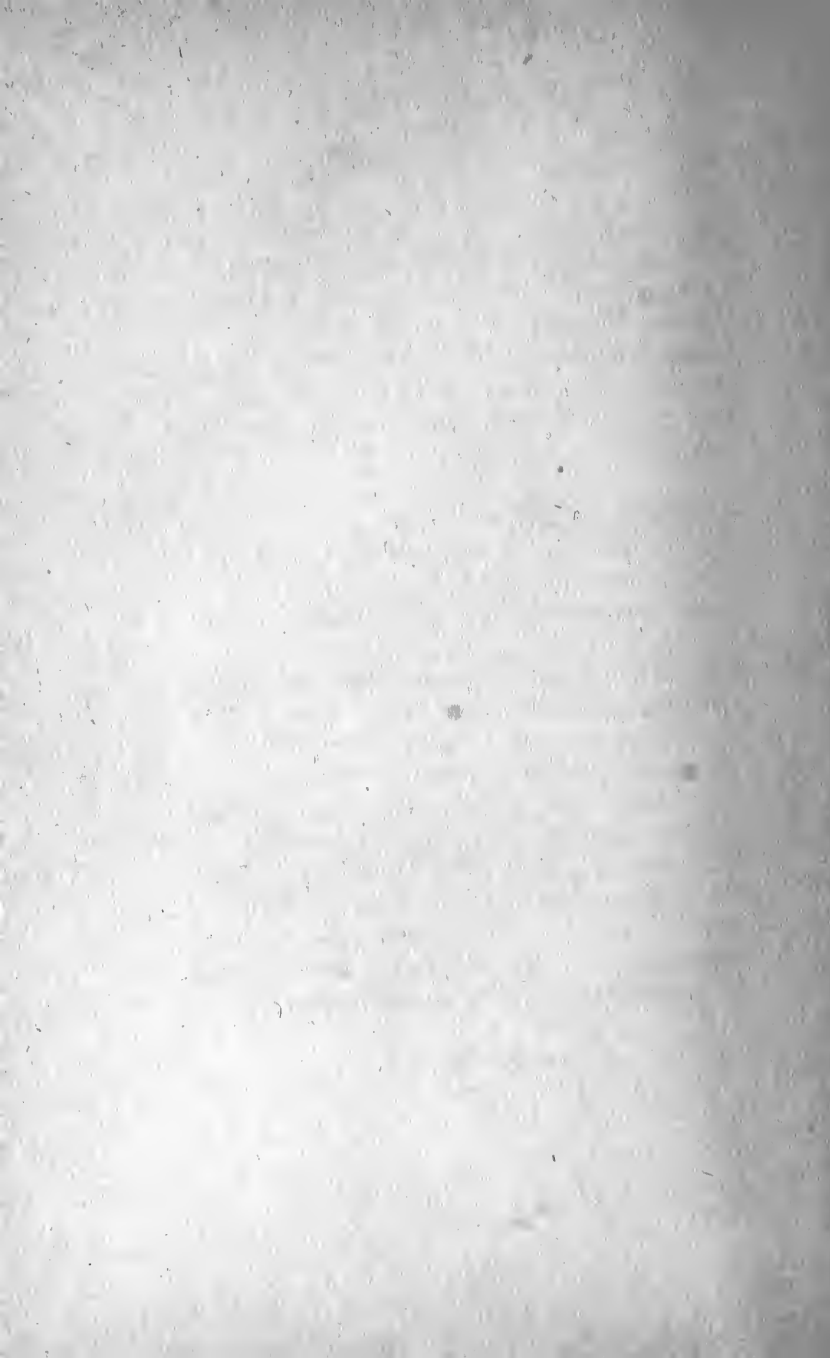
IV. Promises

Of fruits whose juices rare rich wines distil
The swelling buds with ardent prophecies
are rife;
And virile prime mature doth oft fulfil
Fair promises of youth in vernal tides of life.

V. Tears

Tears are never far away
From the light of happiest day;
Tears that fain would lurk and hide
Where ethereal joys abide.

LAUREL LEAVES



THE SONNET

To the Masters of Song

Pray, what may a sonnet be? Frail gossamer
Of dream-stuff spun by lovers in a night
To hang forever sparkling on Time's bough;
Divinely lucent nectar, amber-hued,
And glowing in a precious jeweled cup,
Once poured on high Olympus by the gods,
Who passed it down that men of earth might
drink.

A sonnet is an idyl of delight,
A priceless miniature set round with pearls,
A laurel wreath, a garden ivy-walled,
A fadeless blossom in a crystal glass:

The blooming earth of graves where one may lay,
With pomp funereal and many sighs,
Love that is dead and tattered plumes of Hope
That once were flying wings; a violin,
The Stradivarius of the world, whose strings
Are ever the torn heart-strings of a soul
Whereon are played the rhapsodies of Pain:
The deathless plaint of Love in thrall, denied,
The peal of Love Triumphant, the cloud-rent
Through which there gleams the vision uttermost
Of Life and Death, of Earth and Hell and Heaven.

* * *

Over the light and stillness swept along
The thrilling strain, the one supernal note,
That issued from the silver-fluted throat
Of some rare singer of enchanting song;
In breathless quiet sat the listening throng
To hear those undulations rise and float,
Celestial sounds as memory ever wrote
To dwell in lingering echo, sweet and strong:

So these great lords supreme of Song and Rhyme
Soared far above their daily happy flight,
And sang the Sonnet, born of joy and tears,
Sang it with rapture in the ear of Time
In all that rhythmic upper air and light,
To ring forever down the changing years.

THE POET'S SONG

The poet crowned with deathless bay,
Belovéd of Aoede, sings
In tones of many voices like the sea,
That breathe as full and free
As the birds' glad greeting to the opening day,
The morning choral from a thousand throats;
But while he floats
With silvery wings
On the responsive waves of air
His lambent notes,
He ever sings one song to me, another song
to thee:
And when he strikes the sacred lyre

As only he may dare,
His soul aflame with madness of desire
To reach the universal heart
Through his inspired art,
The listening ear of one most thrills
To the deep, mellow undertones, another
 bends in rapture fine
To catch the sweet and faintest trills:
Thus always with these words of thine,
O poet, though the line
May chant of love or hate, or work or fate,
Though thou shalt sing thy song to her
Who is thy polar star
And worshiped from afar,—
Each vibrant heart must be its own interpreter.

SHELLEY

O rare, embodied song,
O dulcet, joyous notes that climb
Through ardent skies in day's young prime;
Shakespeare foreshadowed thee that time
He made the lark to sing at heaven's gate.
For thee the ancient gods have held high state;
They found thee by Castalian streams
And filled thy days with golden dreams,
To thee they granted bright Apollo's lyre,
Thy tongue they touched with sacred fire;
Thee, whom they loved, they slew,
For that they grudged their gift of thee to men,
And so, through sea and rainbow flame,
They drew thee upward to themselves again.

TO SIDNEY LANIER

Thy golden words flow in, flow out,
Enrapturing all the air about,
As sweet and riotously free
As the mocking bird's wild, happy lay;
As heavenly high and far away
As the voice of wandering winds that play
Remote from earth in the lone pine tree;
Near as the kiss of wooing breeze
From fragrant fern beds where we dream at ease;
Pellucid as some lake with pools in shadow lying,
With lingering waves in silver ripples dying,
Swift, glancing colors, dancing lights,
Or sparks that softly shine in dark of starry
nights:
While all thy song
The whole day long
Is rich and full and running over
With rarest joys for sound's dear lover,
And flashing with those thoughts that in the
early morn
Of moonlit hours in silent peace are born,
And after in men's hearts lie buried still and deep
As the wealth of hoarded treasures that the rob-
ber sea doth keep.

MACDOWELL'S BROOK

To the Lady Who Plays (Mrs. J. H. S.)

Streams celestial lightly run
With low sound of tears and laughter,
Crooning bird songs following after,
While the dancing, smiling sun
Flashes on the running water.

*Presage of the coming years
Brushes past the fount of tears.*

Singing winds, first lingering,
Softly rush on silver wing
Through lacy boughs hung over all;
And rocks where little ripples run
Toss upon the sparkling sun
Crystal drops that leap and fall.

*Crystal chords of memory
Smite the air, and faint and die.*

SONNETS



APOLOGY

“And so,” you say, “the sonnet is a little masterpiece,

A glowing bit of choice perfection, wrought
In loving frenzy by the artist’s hand;

Then why do tyros meddle with the Master’s
brush,

And daub the ivory? Why tempt the sacred gods
With air of fine presumption?”

First you shall tell to me

Why wanton children always pluck apart

The petals of the rose, why boys must fool with
fire,

Slim youths and bright-eyed maids play battledore

And shuttlecock with hearts; wherein doth lie

The nameless fascination of forbidden fruit;

Then will I tell to you

In secret place and under cover of the awful dark,

With many adjurations and strange words,

Why tyros play with sonnets.

FANTASIES

The burdened air thrills with a vague unrest,
The little winds know not which way to turn,
And whimper low; dim fires of desire burn
With wavering flare and flicker as possessed
Of elfish longings grievous and oppressed,
That clutch at the soft heart in wild concern
For boons to earth unknown, joys yet to learn
Beyond all joy that life has yet confessed.
Frail, haunting memories flit through the brain,
Strange, flying thoughts sweeter than summer
rain,—
Thin, airy ghosts of days that have not been
And happy shades of days we may not see;—
Soul throes and strivings to pierce through the
din
And stress of ages past and time to be.

STRIVINGS

In dear illusion from the meadows green
Upsprings the rainbow's arch; the pot of gold
Is ever on beyond, and hope grows old
In long pursuit of joy unknown, unseen,
Of whose bright glory one may only glean
Soft sparkles and a glimmer; days untold
The footsteps follow after visions cold
Of full achievement nigh, that mock the keen
And swift desire; they follow visions fair
That once within the grasp but fade in air;
So ever on up wintry steeps the chase,
And still that radiant figure veils her face;
Still that divine unrest burns in the soul
That tells of whence we come, whither the goal.

TWILIGHT

For thee no more the heat and blinding glare
Of life's full noon, the sad, fantastic whirl,
The throngs that press in maddening dance and
swirl
Of unrelenting struggle, cruel care;
Receding far away the trumpet's blare,
The trampling tread, the din and strife; unfurl
The flag of thy surrender, and impearl
Those tears within thy heart: Time will not spare.
Seek some calm twilight under sheltering eaves,
Where in soft glooms of Autumn's mellowed leaves
Dark silence, like a river of delight,
Flows gently round the unilluminated eyes,
And joys elusive, on the edge of night,
Come fluttering, flying home as daylight dies.

PORTRAIT OF MRS. WHEATON,
BY ALEXANDER

Thou sittest as thy wont in quiet state,
Thine eyes down-dropping in reflective gaze;
Perchance thou dost return through winding maze
Of life's dim path to seek thy long-lost mate,
Thy friends so well-beloved, who have of late
With willing steps tried shining, unknown ways,
And still thou lingerest on the trail of days
Full of fair joys vouchsafed by kindly fate.
Where'er thy thoughts may stray, from some
calm bowers

Of thy soul's peace there comes a holy light,
Perhaps from memory's far lands, whose hours
Are always golden, always sweet and bright;
Or does the future lend its heavenly grace
To the soft radiance of thy tender face?

THE SEA

I

For many years the hills, and now the sea!
Heart of the elder world, whose rhythmic beat
Close to the kind Earth Mother's breast, through
 heat,
Through cold, through solitude and night, flows
 free,
Flows ever to the swift heart beats of me
And these thy lovers; in thee the ages meet,
And Time, the laggard, sits at thy white feet,
Forgetting all the days in thrall to thee.
Eternity stooped down to touch thy brow,
Sang in thine ear her wordless monotone,
Which thou, in deep, sonorous repetend,
Soundest unceasingly until the end
In the waiting ear o' the world, always thine own
When first the waters found their depths and now.

II

Mother of Mysteries, thy secrets keep
Darkly in hidden places, where the spell
Of silence hovers round, save what may tell
Those mutterings and murmurs in thy sleep
Concerning old adventures of the deep,
And crimes unguessed, echoes of ancient knell,
Dim coral treasure caves thou lovest well,
And gardens of wild beauty, terraced steep
Down to that under world, where thou dost hold
Thy galleons and heaps of stolen gold.
What Viking's funeral flames once lit the West,
Whose ashes long have strewn thy heaving breast?
What dead do nourish thee whom thou hast wed?
Nay, let it pass; sirens must have their dead.

III

For thou art old and wicked, though most fair,—
Mistress of wiles; and Helen thou hast seen,
Thy dimpled waves have smiled on Egypt's queen
And caught her starry glance, and Sappho's bare
White arms entreated thee; naught can impair
Those final charms they lent thee; deathless mien
Of beauty, lone, inscrutable, serene,—
Wild song and stormy passion, all are there:
And so thou art half siren, with a heart
Throbbing from lost Atlantis; under ban
Of good and evil; sibyl old thou art;
Thou only and the voice of violin
Can utter forth the restless soul of man,
His wrath, his love, his prayers, his hidden sin.

IV

What dim remembrances may yet enslave,
What subtle reminiscence often thrills
Along the blue and everlasting hills
In mighty swell and rhythms of air that lave
Their brow; what song of deep, resounding wave
Recurrent sweeps through towering trees, and
fills

The homesick heart with longing as it spills
In splashes of spent sound, from winds that rave
In upper fields of air; those ancient pines,—
Their own young little winds that play and run
Far overhead, are chanting the old lines,—
The swash of lapping waters in the sun.
O mountain pine, rememberest thou this day
Cedars and bays of Maine, cypress of Monterey?

V

The overpowering roar and rush of sound
 Upon the granite crest of Sunset Rock
 Rolls onward with the surge and thundering shock
 Of many a rank of billows come'aground;
 'Tis but the voice from over waving mound
 Of chestnut trees below that interlock
 In gold and green; Satulah's clouds that mock
 And glower by day, at midnight flow around
 Her slippery crags, an ocean at her feet;
 And when, where wavering sky and earth-line
 meet,
 Wide seas of foothills shimmer in the light,
 The soul, sans care, like ship escaped from night,
 From storm and wrack, with shining sails and
 free,
 Sets out thereon to search infinity.

VI

All softly clad, in cloud and light enshrined,
Dear Range of Blue, what kinship may there be
Between thy steadfast hills and restless sea?
What age-long bond, O sea, yet undefined,
May hold as strong as chains of iron to bind
The hills, humanity, the soul of thee,
In subtly strange, enduring trinity?
And ever thou dost hold the wandering mind
Of man, a harp of many strings, whereon
To play at will a low, mysterious strain,
Singing thereto seductively upon
The gamut of his longing and his pain;
While interlucent waters calmly lie
'Twixt Time and Earth, and the Eternal Sky.



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